



So, your child is entering Middle School. What can you expect and how do you prepare your child for this exciting transition? The [executive function skills](#) of organization, planning and prioritizing (time management) are important skills for this age group. It is important to be able to look ahead and determine what books, notebooks and school supplies are needed for each successive class throughout the day so that your child can gather what they need from their locker to arrive in the classroom prepared. They also need to be able to keep track of assignment due dates and organize their time efficiently to complete them on time. Impress upon your child the importance of [taking notes](#). This skill will follow them through the rest of their academic career. In addition, discuss project rubrics with your child and break down the assignments by looking for key words to highlight expectations.

What do teachers want you to know? Homework increases up to 20 minutes per night, per class. Fluency and mastery of basic math facts are very important when entering into 6th grade math. In addition, teachers want students to know how to ask for and get help when they need it. This self advocacy skill is critical to their success as a student. Students [ask for help](#) in different ways based on their personality and their comfort level with people in the room socially. If you notice your child is not asking for help either directly to the teacher or through peer support, talk to them about what method of support would work best and then have them share it with their teacher. Some kids just need the word from you that it is ok to ask. Others become anxious in the social situation of the classroom and would prefer to keep their need for help to themselves. It is possible to work with the teacher on a code word, hand signal, any non-verbal signal that would allow the teacher to come to them instead of the child drawing attention to themselves by raising their hand.

In the area of social and emotional development, your child will start to identify with a social group. Teasing and put downs are a part of the social dynamic. They are trying on personas to see what fits and what doesn't with who they are. The response they get from their peers and you, will help to solidify or reject those behaviors. Friendships are very fluid at this age. Your child will be experiencing a rollercoaster of emotions. This emotional spectrum in middle school is due to rapid physical changes mixed with the social feedback they get from peers and parents. Allowing your child to problem solve through these situations helps to develop strong self concept and self esteem.

For more on developmental stages and parenting information, contact your Thrive Parent Liaison, Lori Swenson at lswenson@bssd72.org or 995-4281.